Adams 240.5

VIEW

OF THE

VERY GREAT NATURAL ADVANTAGES

OF IRELAND;

AND OF THE

CRUEL POLICY PURSUED FOR CENTURIES,

TOWARDS THAT ISLAND,

WHEREBY THOSE ADVANTAGES HAVE BEEN BLASTED.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SKETCH OF THE PRESENT DEPLORABLE CONDITION OF THE IRISH PEASANTRY.

Extracted from the Vindiciæ Hibernicæ.

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PHILADELPHIA:

H. C. CAREY & I. LEA—CHESNUT STREET.

1823.

CHAPTER I.

Great natural advantages of Ireland. Soil. Climate. Harbours. Rivers. Lakes. Mines and Minerals. Fisheries.

"And sure *it is a most beautiful and sweet country as any is under heaven*, being stored throughout with many goodly rivers; replenished with all sorts of fish most abundantly; *sprinkled with many very sweet islands and goodly lakes, like little inland seas*, that will carry even shippes upon their waters, adorned with goodly woods even fit for building of houses and ships, so commodiously, as that *if some princes in the world had them, they would soone hope to be lords of all the seas, and ere long of all the world; also full of very good ports and havens opening upon England*, as inviting us to come unto them, to see what excellent commodities that country can afford, besides *the soyle itselfe most fertile, fit to yeeld all kinde of fruit that shall be committed thereunto.* And lastely, the heavens most milde and temperate, though somewhat more moist in the parts towards the west."[1056]

"I have visited all the provinces of that kingdom in sundry journies and circuits, wherein I have observed the good temperature of the air, the fruitfulness of the soil, the pleasant and commodious seats for habitations, the safe and large ports and havens lying open for traffic into all the west parts of the world; the long inlets of many navigable rivers; and so *many great lakes and fresh ponds within the land, as the like are not to be seen in any part of Europe; the rich fishings and wild fowl of all kinds; and lastly, the bodies and minds of the people endued with extraordinary abilities by nature.*"[1057]

"Ireland is, in respect of its situation, the number of its commodious harbours, and the natural wealth which it produces, *the fittest island to acquire riches of any in the European seas;* for as by its situation it lies the most commodious for the West Indies, Spain, and the northern and east countries, so it is not only supplied by nature with all the necessaries of life, but can over and above export large quantities to foreign countries; in so much that *had it been mistress of a free trade, no nation in Europe of its extent, could in an equal number of years, acquire greater wealth.*"[1058]

THE most important natural advantages which nations enjoy, may be comprised under the heads—fertility of soil—salubrity of climate—capacious harbours fitted for external commerce—advantageous intersection for internal trade by rivers—valuable mines and minerals—and productive fisheries.

I propose to show that those advantages have been so liberally bestowed on Ireland by a bounteous heaven, that nothing but the most horrible and blighting policy could have prevented her from enjoying as high a degree of happiness as ever fell to the lot of any nation.*

*For the contents of this chapter, I am almost entirely indebted to a most excellent work of Thomas Newenham, entitled "A View of the Natural, Political, and Commercial Circumstances of Ireland." From Arthur Young I have likewise borrowed freely.

[1056] Spencer, p. 28, Anno 1590. [1057] Sir John Davies, p. 1. Anno 1616.
[1058] Brown's Essays on Trade, Anno 1728.

"That Ireland greatly surpasses her sister country, England, in the aggregate of the endowments of nature, is abundantly obvious. And it may fairly be questioned whether the latter, actually abounding in wealth beyond any other country in Europe, *can boast of any one natural advantage, which the former does not possess in a superior degree.*"[1060]

Soil.

With respect to soil, Ireland is blest in the highest degree. Arthur Young, an English traveller, who devoted half his life to agricultural enquiries and investigations, has pronounced sentence on this point, from which there is no appeal. He says that "natural fertility, acre for acre, over the two kingdoms, is certainly in favour of Ireland," —and further, that in proportion to the size of the two countries, Ireland was, when he wrote, much more cultivated, having much less waste land of all sorts.*

* "To judge of Ireland by the conversation one sometimes hears in England, it would be supposed that one-half of it was covered with bogs, and the other with mountains filled with Irish, ready to fly at the sight of a civilized being. There are people who will smile when they hear that *in proportion to the size of the two countries, Ireland is more cultivated than England, having much less waste land of all sorts. Of uncultivated mountains there are no such tracts as are found in our four northern counties, and the North Riding of Yorkshire, with the eastern line of Lancaster, nearly down to the peak of Derby, which form an extent of above a hundred miles of waste.* The most considerable of this sort in Ireland are in Kerry, Galway, and Mayo, and some in Sligo and Donnegal. But all these together will not make the quantity we have in the four northern counties; the vallies in the Irish mountains are also more inhabited, I think, than those of England, except where there are mines, and consequently some sort of cultivation creeping up the sides. *Natural fertility, acre for acre, over the two kingdoms, is certainly in favour of Ireland;* of this I believe there can scarcely be a doubt entertained, when it is considered that some of the more beautiful, and even best cultivated countries in England, owe almost every thing to the capital, art and industry of the inhabitants."[1061]

"The traveller who hastens through Ireland as most British tourists do, and beholds its richest pastures overgrown with thistles, fern, ragwort, and other weeds, will find it difficult to believe that its soil is much more fertile than that of the highly cultivated fields of England. "You must examine into the Irish soil," says Mr. Young "before you can believe, that a country which has so beggarly an appearance, can be so rich and fertile."[1062]

"*If I was to name the characteristics of an excellent soil, I should say that upon which you may fat an ox, and feed off a crop of tur-*

[1060] Newenham, 86. [1061] Young, II. part ii. p. 3. [1062] Idem, II. 147.

Ireland, likewise, exceeds France in the proportion of cultivated lands; considerably more than two-thirds of the former being cultivated; whereas there are less than two-thirds of the latter.*

Of the unreclaimed lands of other countries, a large portion is wholly unfit for cultivation; whereas, the greater part of those in Ireland may be easily reclaimed and rendered highly productive.†

nips. By the way I recollect little or no such land in England, yet it is not uncommon in Ireland."[1063]

"In the statistical survey of the county of Meath, it is stated that the lands of Diamer in the barony of Fowre are so very rich that the first 10 or 12 crops are quite useless, running to straw, and lodging; that 50 bullocks of 8 cwt. were fattened on 48 acres of the lands of Skreene; and that in the year 1800, which was very dry and unfavourable, 76 cows and two bulls were supported on 77 acres."[1064]

"In at least 18 out of 32 counties, there are tracts of land, which, *for the most part, are not to be surpassed in natural fertility by perhaps any other land in the world.* And to an equality with these, it is certain that a vast proportion of the remaining bogs might easily be brought."[1065]

* "That Ireland surpasses France, in the proportion of her cultivated land, is sufficiently confirmed by the concurrent statements of Mr. Young and others, who have made the soil of the latter a subject of their researches. Mr. Young's distribution of the land of France is as follows, viz:

	Acres.
Arable and Lucerne - - - -	75,000,000
Meadows - - - - - - -	4,000,000
Vines - - - - - - - -	5,000,000
Total of cultivated land - - - -	84,000,000
Woods - - - - - - - -	19,850,000
Wastes - - - - - - -	27,150,000
Total of uncultivated land - - - -	47,000,000

or upwards of one-third of the whole."[1066]

† "A vast proportion of the unreclaimed land of other countries is almost utterly unproductive, or completely sterile; a vast proportion of the unreclaimed land of Ireland is undoubtedly the contrary. In other countries the operation of reclaiming requires considerable skill; and in most instances is attended with immense expense. In Ireland, where nature is rather to be assisted than overcome, it requires but little skill; and the attendant expense, if viewed in conjunction with the future permanent profit, is scarcely sufficient to deter the most timid speculator. In most other countries, the natural means of fertilizing such land as has been prepared by any expensive process for the plough, are extremely scanty: in Ireland they are almost every where found in the greatest abundance and perfection."[1067]

[1063] Young, II. 211. [1064] Newenham, 81. [1065] Idem, 82.
[1066] Newenham, 65. [1067] Idem, 66.

One striking advantage Ireland possesses, probably in a degree beyond any other country. The rocks and mountains, which elsewhere, are generally bare, or covered only with useless weeds or wild shrubs, are in Ireland, clothed with luxuriant verdure.*

In no part of the bounties of nature as regards soil, is Ireland more fortunate, than in the superabundance of manures of almost every kind, and of the very best quality.†

* "In most of the mountainous districts of Ireland, 5000 acres will be found to yield more and better food for cattle than 100,000 in many parts of Scotland and Wales. The Irish mountains are entirely different from those of the countries just mentioned. Herbage of some sort or other grows on the very summits of some of the loftiest in Ireland; but in Scotland, and for the most part in Wales, cattle stray from their pasture as they ascend the mountain's brow. The peculiar tendency of the Irish soil to grass is such, that the mountainous land yields good sustenance to prodigious droves of young cattle."[1068]

"The mountains of Ireland are the principal nurseries for those immense herds of bullocks and cows which are fattened or fed on the luxuriant low lands; and almost the only nurseries for those which are annually exported to England, and of which the number in four years, ending 5th January 1804, amounted to 106,578, worth, according to the prices current in that year, 1,044,464*l.* The number exported in two years, ending 5th January 1800, was 54,115."[1069]

* "If as much rain fell upon the clays of England, (a soil very rarely met with in Ireland, and never without much stone,) as falls upon the rocks of her sister island, those lands could not be cultivated. But *the rocks here are clothed with verdure. Those of limestone, with only a thin covering of mould, have the softest and most beautiful turf imaginable.*"[1070]

† "In those parts of most countries which are remote from large towns, the cultivation of a farm, owing to a deficiency of good natural manures, must, in general, be proportionate to the stock of cattle kept thereon. But in Ireland where such manures almost every where abound, the dung of cattle is not indispensably requisite to the progress of agriculture, and accordingly much less attention is paid to its collection than is observable in other countries. Labour and skill alone will render the lands of Ireland fertile in the extreme; but the labour and skill of man require in most other countries, an additional agent for producing this effect. Mr. Young tells us, that on the coast of Mayo, where sea and other manures are in plenty, "the common people let their dunghills accumulate till they become such a nuisance that they remove their cabins to get rid of them." He says likewise, and the fact is well known, that the dung of the city of Limerick was generally thrown into the river Shannon."[1071]

"With the exception of the counties of Wexford, Wicklow, Tyrone, and Antrim, limestone is found in the greatest abundance, in every county of Ireland; as is also, with the exception of a few coun-

[1068] Newenham, 66. [1069] Idem, 67. [1070] Young, II. part ii. 3.
[1071] Newenham, 73.

Climate.

The climate of Ireland is remarkable for its mildness, particularly in the southern province, where the fields generally afford pasturage for the cattle during the winter. They are rarely housed.* The severity of that season experienced in most other countries of so high a latitude, is here almost altogether unknown. Snows and ice to any considerable extent, are rarely experienced.†

ties, that incomparable manure, limestone gravel. White, grey, and blue marls, of the best quality, are likewise found in most of the counties, and compensate in some of them, especially in Wexford, for a deficiency of lime."[1072]

"The seacoasts, likewise, from which, by the way, no part of Ireland is at a greater distance than 50 miles, furnish an inexhaustible supply of manures. Coral sand, a manure of superior value, is found on the south coast in Baltimore bay; on the south-west coast in Bantry bay; on the west coast in Tralee bay, Clew bay, Roundstone bay, Kilkerran harbour, and Galway bay; on the north coast in Mulroy harbour; on the east coast of Brayhead, in the county of Wicklow, and in other places. Shelly sand, which nearly equals the coral in effect, is found on the south-west coast in Dunmanus bay; on the east coast near Birr Island, in Red bay, and in many other parts of the same coast. Sea weeds, sea sand of different colours, and sea ooze, are found in abundance all round the coast; and, except the last, which has lately been found to be a very good manure, are every where used, with excellent effect, by the farmers who live within five or six miles of the coast."[1073]

* "A very great proportion of the fat cattle sent to Waterford, Limerick, and Cork, are never housed. The cattle slaughtered in the market of Cork, in the months of February and March, with the exception of those fattened at the distilleries, are eight out of ten, fattened wholly on grass. The dairy cows in the province of Munster are never, through downright necessity, housed. In a part of the county of Kerry the people often leave their potatoes in the beds without additional covering during the winter; and they have been known to obtain two crops of corn from the same land within the year."[1074]

† "In respect of mildness and equability, qualities of a very advantageous nature, the climate of Ireland is surpassed by very few, if by any other in Europe. At a time, when in consequence of the unreclaimed and uncleared state of the country, the climate must necessarily have been inferior to what it now is, Giraldus Cambrensis spoke of it in the following terms, "Terra terrarum temperatissima, nec cancri calor exæstuans compellit ad umbras, nec ad focus capricorni rigor invitat, aeris amœnitate temperieque tempora fere cuncta tepescunt." Its general mildness, indeed, is such, that, except in the northern counties, the rich pastures or those which have been fairly treated, exhibit in the midst of winter, the most beautiful verdure imaginable, affording sustenance to cattle throughout the year. The rigours of the winter, which, together with the scantiness of natural

[1072] Newenham, 74. [1073] Idem, 75 [1074] Idem, 41

The chief disadvantage under which Ireland labours, is the excessive rains which prevail there, and sometimes injure the harvests, and defeat the hopes of the husbandman. This moisture of the climate would, a priori, lead to an opinion that it was injurious to health. But experience, the unerring test of theories, overturns this doctrine, how plausible soever it might appear. There is no nation more robust or hardy.*

Harbours, Rivers, and Lakes.

Ireland is as highly endowed by nature with these very important means of promoting national wealth, power and resources, as in any other respect whatever; and, in proportion to its extent, does not yield to any nation in the world. The coast is so copiously indented with harbours, that they lie almost universally within a few miles of each other.†[1075] They are with scarcely an exception superior to those of England.‡

The rivers are uncommonly numerous.§ The country was survey-

manures, render the beast house and foddering yard primary objects of the farmer's attention, in other countries, are seldom, and in few parts, experienced in Ireland. And accordingly, there is not a country in Europe, north of the Alps, where places for the accommodation of cattle are so rarely to be found."[1076]

* "The humidity of the Irish atmosphere proves by no means injurious to the health of the inhabitants; on the contrary, it being generally accompanied by an increased agitation of the air, they enjoy better health, during the prevalence of the wet winds which blow from the Atlantic ocean, than at other times."[1077]

† "Taking one district with another, there is a harbour, or safe anchoring place, to about every 150 square miles, or every 96,000 acres."[1078]

‡ "There *are not twenty harbours in England and Wales* which can be *classed with forty of the best in Ireland:* nor, with perhaps the single exception of Milford, which is about seven miles long and one broad, with from four to thirteen fathoms on a bottom of mud, is there one in the former, which can, in almost any respect, be compared with the best ten in the latter; and if the safe anchoring places be added to the harbours of each country, Ireland will rank above England, not only in capaciousness, safety, and proportionate number of harbours, but likewise in the general number of places for the accommodation of shipping, there being one hundred and thirty-six harbours and anchoring places belonging to the former; and, as far as appears by the charts which the writer has examined, only one hundred and twelve to the latter."[1079]

§ "So numerous are the rivers of Ireland, in proportion to its size, and so abundant the supply of water, that we may safely say, almost every parish might enjoy the benefits of internal navigation, at an expense which, one place with another, many a company of British undertakers would disregard, and that very few parts of Ireland, com-

[1075] Newenham, 8. [1076] Idem, 40. [1077] Idem, 43. [1078] Idem, 8.
[1079] Idem, 14.

ed some years since, with a view to internal improvement by canals, and thirty-two rivers were found, capable of being rendered navigable at an expense not exceeding ten shillings sterling per head of the population of the island.*

After having enumerated eighteen rivers, the Shannon, the Barrow, the Suir, the Nore, the Blackwater, the Slaney, the Bann, the Boyne, &c. the writer proceeds: "In respect of navigable rivers, as well as relative situation and harbours, Ireland certainly has the advantage of England. If the best eighteen rivers in the latter be duly compared, in every particular, with those which have just been imperfectly described, the inferiority of the English rivers, upon the whole, will be clearly perceived. The Thames, the Severn, the Humber, the Medway, the Dee, the Mersey, the Lon, the Orwell, the Yare, and the Ribble, have all of them, sand-banks at their entrance, which except in the instance of the Slaney, is not the case with any of the Irish rivers; and which render the navigation in those important parts, intricate, and, in some instances, dangerous. Their streams are not, for the most part, near so copious, nor do they flow through such extremely fertile land, as the rivers of Ireland. The Tweed, Tyne, Tees, Were, Wye, and Avon, are, no doubt, fine rivers; but in several respects they will be found to fall short of a considerable number of those of which Ireland can boast."[1080]

paratively speaking, would be found ineligible for the establishment of manufactures through a deficiency of water, or the want of water-carriage. Of 248 mills for grinding corn, erected in Ireland between the years 1758 and 1790, every one, as far as the writer can learn, is turned by water. Windmills are in no country less common, or less necessary, than in this."[1081]

* "Thirty-two rivers were found, by *actual survey*, to be fit and capable of being rendered navigable, whereof the united lengths, in addition to that of the Shannon, and those of the projected canals, exceed one thousand miles.

"Had the proposed works, therefore, been carried into effect, ten thousand square miles, or 6,400,000 acres, would, at furthest, have been within five miles of some navigable river or canal. And if to this be added the sinuous line of the Irish coast, comprising 1737 miles, it will be seen that 18,685 square miles, or 11,958,400 acres, which constitute almost two-third parts of the area of Ireland, would have lain within five miles of sea, river, or canal; and three millions of money, faithfully and skilfully expended, would probably be more than sufficient for the purpose."[1082]

"In addition to a vast number of rivers, several of them navigable, many of them considerable, which lose themselves in others, in the interior parts of the country, there are in Ireland, exclusive of small streams, one hundred and twenty-five which flow directly and immediately into the sea, or its different inlets.

"The maritime counties comprise two-thirds of the land of Ireland. Each of them has from two to twelve of the rivers in proportion to the

[1080] Newenham, 25. [1081] Ibid. [1082] Idem, 27.

The island is moreover studded with lakes, many of which afford an easy communication with the seas which surround the coast, and all of which might be rendered highly instrumental in promoting the national prosperity.*

Mines and Minerals.

There is probably not a country in the world, which, for its extent, is one-half so abundantly supplied with the most precious minerals and fossils as Ireland.† The enumeration made by Newenham,‡ as

extent of its seacoast, nor, with the exception of Wicklow, is there one of them which has not the advantage of one or more rivers, either actually navigable, to a very considerable distance from the sea, or capable of being rendered so at a moderate expense.*[1083]

"Many of the inland counties likewise participate this advantage with those on the coast. Indeed there is not one of them which might not be rendered capable of enjoying it."[1084]

* "The lakes of Ireland which discharge their superfluous waters immediately into the sea, may also be considered, with reference to the benefits of commerce, as extremely important advantages. Of this description are loughs Neagh, Earne, Corrib, Conn, Nallenroe, Melvin, Arrow, Lilly, Rapharn and Furran, Ballinahinch lough, the lake of Killarney, or Lough Lane, and several others of inferior note."[1085]

† "There is not a county in Ireland, which does not contain some valuable mineral or fossil; several of them, it is now ascertained, abound with treasures of this sort; and these, for the greater part, are most happily situated for the exportation of their products, either in a rude or manufactured state."[1086]

‡ "The following account, drawn from the statistical surveys of 17 counties, the writings of Dr. Smith, the specimens in the museum of the Dublin Society, the communication of Mr. Donald Stewart, itinerant mineralogist of that society, and from the information of others, will serve, notwithstanding its deficiency, to give a sufficient view of the minerals and fossils of Ireland.

"Armagh contains lead, ochres of different colours, and various beautiful marbles.

"Antrim contains coal and gypsum in abundance, beautiful crystals, pebbles, and different sort of ochres.

"Carlow contains granite, talk, marbles, crystals, and ochres.

"Cavan contains fine lead ore, iron, coal, ochres, clay, fuller's-earth, sulphur, copper, silver, and jasper.

"Clare contains lead, iron, copper, coal, and beautiful spars like those of Derbyshire.

"Cork contains lead, iron, copper, coal, fine slate, extremely beautiful marbles of a great variety of colours, petrifactions, brown and yellow ochres, excellent potter's-clay, and amethysts of great beauty.

"Donegal contains rich lead ore, immense quantities of different sorts of clays, coal, silicious sand, manganese, iron, beautiful granite,

[1083] Newenham, 18. [1084] Ibid. [1085] Idem, 28. [1086] Idem, 45.

stated in the annexed note, must excite the astonishment of the reader, who could not possibly have conceived the extent to which na-

chalcedony, marble resembling that which is called statuary marble, and granites.

" Down contains iron, fuller's-earth, soap-stone, rich lead, marbles of different sorts, crystals, granite, copper, and very fine slate.

" Dublin contains copper, lead, ochres of different colours, potter's-clay, beautiful pebbles, crystals, and porphyry.

" Fermanagh contains rich iron ore and coal.

" Galway contains rich lead, crystals, pearls, and marbles of superior beauty.

" Kerry contains abundance of rich copper, lead, beautiful marbles of various combinations of colours, cobalt, crystals, pearls and amethysts.

" Kildare contains marbles of different colours, which bear a higher polish than those brought from Italy.

" Kilkenny contains iron, coal, ochres, pipe and potter's-clay, marbles (some of them singular and beautiful) granite, and jasper.

" King's County contains a silver mine near Edenderry, but not worked these 40 years.

" Limerick contains iron, copper, lead, coal, and fine slate.

" Londonderry contains iron, copper, lead, abundance of crystals, beautiful pebbles and petrifactions found near Lough Neagh, granite and handsome marbles.

" Leitrim contains inexhaustible stores of iron and coal, copper, blue, green, yellow, pale red, and crimson-coloured clays, fuller's-earth, and garnites.

" Longford contains great variety of marbles, ochres, lead, fine slate, extremely rich iron ore, and jasper.

" Louth contains ochres and fuller's-earth.

" Mayo contains abundance of iron ore, ochres, granite, coal, slate of a superior quality, beautiful black marble without speck, and manganese.

" Meath contains ochres, and rich and abundant copper ore.

" Monaghan contains iron, lead, manganese, coal, marble, fuller's-earth and antimony.

" Queen's-county contains iron, coal, copper, marble, ochres, fuller's earth and potter's clay.

" Roscommon contains ochres, coal, iron, and marble exhibiting the petrified skeletons of different animals, and bearing a very high polish.

" Sligo contains iron, copper, lead, coal, fine clays, talk, silver, and, in abundance near the coast, a stone which bears a high polish, and is called serpent stone, from figures which it exhibits resembling the skeletons of these animals.

" Tipperary contains rich and abundant copper and lead mines, coal, silver, plenty of fine slate, clays, and the most beautiful marbles.

" Tyrone contains iron, and plenty of good potter's-clay.

" Waterford contains copper in abundance, iron, ochres, handsome

ture had carried her bounties in this department, in which she has been liberal to a degree of prodigality.*

pebbles, and, near the harbour, a most beautiful green and black marble.

"Westmeath contains copper, lead, coal, and handsome yellow and dove-coloured marbles.

"Wexford contains lead, copper, iron, marble, ochres, and a blue earth.

"Wicklow contains crystals, sulphur, manganese, copper in abundance, garnite,† lead, tin, and several other metallic substances, including gold.

"By this account, incomplete as it is, Ireland appears to contain the following 30 different sorts of minerals and fossils, viz.

2. Amethysts.	2. Garnites.	4. Pebbles.
1. Antimony.	7. Granite.	2. Petrifactions.
15. Coal.	1. Gypsum.	1. Porphyry.
1. Cobalt.	19. Iron.	1. Silicious sand.
17. Copper.	2. Jasper	3. Silver.
1. Chalcedony.	16. Lead.	6. Slate.
8. Crystals.	2. Manganese.	1. Soap-stone.
9. Clays of various sorts.	19. Marble.	1. Spars.
	15. Ochres.	2. Sulphur.
5. Fuller's-earth.	2. Pearls.	2. Talk.
1. Gold.		

"The figures prefixed to the different minerals and fossils, denote the number of counties in which they have been discovered."[1087]

"The gold mine at Croghan, in the county of Wicklow, began to attract attention about the year 1795. According to a calculation made on the subject, the sum of 10,000*l.* was paid, at the rate of 3*l.* 15*s.* per ounce, to the country people, for the gold which they collected. Before the government took possession of the mine, there was found one piece of gold which weighed 22 ounces, and which is believed to be the largest ever found in Europe. From the commencement of the works to June 1801, there were found 599 ounces of gold."[1088]

* "Mr. Lawson, an English miner, stated in evidence before the Irish house of commons, that the iron-stone at Arigna lay in beds of from three to twelve fathoms deep; and that it could be raised for two shillings and sixpence the ton, which is five shillings cheaper than in Cumberland; that the coal in the neighbourhood, was better than any in England, and could be raised for three shillings and sixpence the ton; and that it extended six miles in length, and five in breadth. He also stated that fire-brick clay, and free-stone of the best qualities, were in the neighbourhood, and that a bed of potter's clay extended there two miles in length, and one in breadth. Mr. Clarke, on the same occasion, declared that the iron-ore was inexhaustible. And our

† Decayed granite used in the manufacture of porcelain.

[1087] Newenham, 45. [1088] Idem, 49.

Fisheries.

For this inexhaustible source of wealth, Ireland is admirably situated—and, with proper encouragement, it might have been carried to an extent of national and individual benefit ten-fold what it has ever produced. Thousands of her superfluous population might find employment in it, to their own advantage and that of the nation. But no adequate pains have ever been taken to cultivate even those advantages which Ireland might enjoy without interfering with the monopolizing spirit of England.*

Materials for Roads.

In this respect, nature has been as bountiful to Ireland, as in any of those previously enumerated.†

distinguished countryman, Mr. Kirwan, whose opinions on mineralogical subjects few will attempt to refute, affirmed that the Arigna iron was better than any iron made from any species of single ore in England."[1089]

*"There is scarcely a part of Ireland but what is well situated for some fishery of consequence; and her coast and innumerable creeks and rivers' mouths are the resort of vast shoals of herrings, cod, ling, hake, mackarel, etc. which might with proper attention be converted into funds of wealth."[1090]

"In 1784, there were 514 vessels engaged in the Irish fishery, giving employment to 3723 men and boys."[1091]

"The salmon fisheries of Ireland are, in proportion, infinitely more numerous and productive, than those of any other country, the natural history whereof has fallen into the writer's hands. In various parts of Ireland, remote from each other, he has seen from 10 to 30 fine salmon taken at one drag. Mr. Daniel states that 1,452 salmon were taken at one drag in the river Bann, in the year 1780; and 882 in like manner, in the year 1788: that the salmon fishery there lets for 6000*l.*, and the eel fishery for 1000*l.* a year."[1092]

"The general price of the salmon at the Bann is 4*d.* per pound; at Ballyshannon in the Earne less; and during the last lent, the Roman Catholic miners, employed at the copper mine near Killarney, paid but 2*d.* per pound, and were amply supplied."[1093]

†"In respect of materials for the construction of smooth and durable roads, no country in the world can be more happily circumstanced than Ireland. With the exception of four or five counties, limestone, which is one of the best materials, is found in most districts in the greatest abundance; as is also, with the same exception, that incomparable material, lime-stone gravel. Roads properly repaired with these materials, ought, though much frequented, to last at least ten years. The writer knows, by experience, that they may be made to last fifteen."[1094]

[1089] Newenham, 50. [1090] Idem, 52.—Young, II. p. ii. 186.
[1091] Newenham, 53. [1092] Idem, 54. [1093] Ibid. [1094] Idem, 29.

CHAPTER II.

Blighting and withering policy of England towards Ireland. Lord Strafford's destructive project. Illiberal addresses of the English parliament to king William. Woollen manufacture crushed. Silk manufacture. Glass manufacture. Duties in England and Ireland.

"Under the paralising effects of the mercantile spirit, the legislature of Britain really treated the people of Ireland, *unprotected as they were by an independent parliament*, or rather *wantonly and treacherously exposed to ill treatment by a dependent and mercenary one*, much worse than that legislature did or could have treated the people of any of those countries, with which in the vicissitudes of politics, it might frequently be engaged in war."[1095]

"*To cramp, obstruct, and render abortive the industry of the Irish were the objects of the British trader. To gratify commercial avarice, to serve Britain at the expense of Ireland, or to facilitate the government of the latter*, were the varying objects of the British minister. To keep down the Papists, cost what it would, and to augment their own revenues by the public money, instead of urging the adoption of wise, liberal, and patriotic measures, calculated to quadruple the rents of their estates, were the objects of the reputed representatives of the Irish people: and to secure themselves from retaliation on the part of the Roman Catholics, whom *they were encouraged to persecute, and taught to dread*, was the general object of the Irish gentry."[1096]

"Almost all the acts affecting the trade and manufactures of Ireland, which passed in the British and Irish parliaments, anterior to 1799, except those in the latter, which related to the linen manufacture, will be found to aim at *promoting the commercial welfare of Britain, exclusively; at restricting the trade and suppressing the manufactures of Ireland; or at precluding all commercial reciprocity between the two countries.*"[1097]

IT has been established in the preceding chapter, that Ireland is blest by nature in as high a degree, as any nation in the world, without exception. If she is excelled by some countries in a more genial climate, this disadvantage, the only one of importance under which she labours, is amply compensated by various advantages, from which those nations whose climate is preferable, are debarred. Let other countries most highly favoured by nature, be successively compared with her, and the soundness of this position will appear incontrovertible. It might be supposed that such transcendent blessings being lavished on Ireland, she must enjoy as high a degree of happiness as any other nation whatsoever. But this calculation would be miserably erroneous. It will appear from the sketches I shall give in the next chapter, that the Irish peasantry are in as wretched a state as any people in Europe, perhaps in the world—and indeed more wretched than nine-tenths of the peasantry on the surface of the globe.

The question is, how such a blessed tree should produce such bitter fruit—how such stores of wretchedness could be shed over a land so transcendently favoured?

[1095] Newenham, 106. [1096] Idem, 97. [1097] Idem, 120.

The answer is obvious. The monopolizing spirit of England has sat like an incubus over the sister island, blasted all its blessings, and entailed on it unutterable woes. Whenever the interests of the whole Irish nation came in collision even with those of a single city, town, or corporation in England, they were offered up a sacrifice on the altars of avarice and cupidity without remorse and without control. In every case, of course, when the great national interests on both sides interfered, those of the Irish were unfeelingly devoted to destruction.

Throughout the whole career of the connexion, there has scarcely been one measure adopted on the part of England towards Ireland that wears the semblance of a magnanimous policy, except when forced from her fears during the American revolution.

Lest these positions should appear overstrained and the result of prejudice, I deem it necessary to fortify them by incontrovertible English and Irish authorities, which cannot fail to impose a reluctant silence on the spirit of cavil.

"The object of that species of policy which the British government had exercised towards Ireland, (said Mr. Pitt, in his speech on the commercial propositions in the year 1785,) had been *to debar her from the enjoyment and use of her own resources, and to make her completely subservient to the interest and opulence of Britain.*"[1098]

"In reviewing the different acts of the parliaments of Britain and Ireland, which affected the trade of the latter, it will be found that *the trade of a distinct kingdom, the trade of an essential part of the British empire, was unsuitably, unjustly, unwisely, and oppressively, limited like that of a colony; that the prosperity of Ireland was always sacrificed to that of Britain; that, with the exception of the linen, every valuable manufacture established in Ireland, or of the establishment or even introduction whereof there was any prospect, and which was likely to become in any degree a competitor, either in the home or foreign market, with a similar one undertaken in Britain, however insignificant, was industriously depressed;* that the Irish were invariably obliged to give the preference to the produce of British industry; that, with the foregoing exception, no manufacture of Ireland was fairly received by Britain; that downright necessity alone, occasioned the admission of even the rude produce of the former into the latter; that the acts of the Irish parliament which affected to aim at internal improvements, calculated to enlarge the trade of the country, or which purported to be for the advancement of any lucrative species of enterprize, were, for the most part, merely illusive."[1099]

"The exercise of any right on the part of Ireland, which, even in speculation, was likely to prove in the least degree prejudicial to the most trivial manufacture of England, was utterly inconsistent with that illiberal and impolitic system which the latter pursued with regard to the former; and in which the Irish parliament basely concurred: a system constituted of acts *completely obstructive of every species of Irish competition in the English market; restrictive of almost every species of mercantile and manufacturing industry in Ireland;* and corroborative of that English competition, in the Irish market, which tended to foster every infant manufacture of England, and to

[1098] Newenham, 89. [1099] Idem, 97.

overwhelm every similar one in Ireland. *Whenever any manufacture or branch of industry in England was thought to require encouragement, the Irish parliament readily imposed duties on similar ones from other countries, admitting those from Britain duty free. Whenever the exigencies of the Irish government required the imposition of duties on merchandise imported, the British were uniformly exempted.* And whenever an infant manufacture in Ireland seemed likely to rival a similar one in Britain, the same practice was pursued, thus *opening a field for the usual efficacy of superior British capitals in overpowering the unaided industry of Ireland.*"[1100]

To enter into a full detail of this cruel and withering policy would require a volume. I shall confine myself to a mere sketch, which, however, will be abundantly sufficient to satisfy the reader that the connexion of Ireland with England, has operated the misery and wretchedness of one of the fairest portions of the earth.

I shall not go further back than the time of lord Strafford, in 1636, as the records of the commercial and trading policy pursued towards Ireland, though occasionally glanced at, are not sketched in history, with sufficient precision, before that period.

One of the earliest measures of Strafford's administration was to suppress and destroy the woollen manufacture in Ireland.* For this manufacture the luxuriant pasturage of the island particularly qualifies it.

In 1665, the importation from Ireland into England of great cattle, sheep, and swine, beef, pork, and bacon, was voted "*a common nuisance,*" and subjected to forfeiture.† These were the chief arti-

* "Wisdom advises to keep this kingdom as much subordinate and dependent upon England as is possible, *and holding them from the manufacture of wool,* (which, unless otherwise directed, *I shall by all means discourage,) and then inforcing them to fetch their clothing from thence,* and to take their salt from the king, (being that which preserves and gives value to all their native staple commodities,) how can they depart from us without nakedness and beggary?"[1101]

In another letter on the woollen trade, Strafford says—"*I had and so should still discourage it all I could, unless otherwise directed by his majesty* and their lordships, in regard it would trench not only upon the clothings of England, being our staple commodity, so as if they should manufacture their own wools, which grew to very great quantities, *we should not only lose the profit we made now by indraping their wools, but his majesty lose extremely by his customs, and in conclusion it might be feared, they would beat us out of the trade itself, by underselling us, which they were well able to do.*"[1102]

† "The exportation of lean oxen and cows from an insular country to any other, situated at a greater distance from it than thirty or forty leagues, and possessing a sufficiency for the use of its inhabitants, can never be attended with sufficient profit to induce the continuance of the practice. England was the only country lying near enough to

[1100] Newenham, 118. [1101] Strafford, I. 193. [1102] Idem, II. 19.

cles of export of the Irish at the time, for agriculture was at so low an ebb, that they did not raise much more of the fruits of the earth, than sufficed for their own consumption—and the measures taken by lord Strafford, and the havoc of the long civil war, had so far destroyed the manufacture of woollens, that they were unable to make any considerable quantity for exportation. This wicked measure ruined thousands of the Irish, who had wholly depended on the sale of cattle for their subsistence, and who were thus consigned to destruction.

This prohibition, however, led to the extension of the woollen manufacture in Ireland, for which the raw material was furnished by the fleeces of the sheep that would have been exported to England and fostered the manufacture there. At a subsequent period, this manufacture was making considerable progress in Ireland. The great increase of the flocks of sheep, and the cheapness of labour had given it a considerable spring. The deadly jealousy and hostility of the English, always operating as a blight and a pestilence to Irish prosperity, was aroused, and the destruction of this important manufacture was machinated. Both houses of the British parliament presented addresses to king William, praying that he would discountenance the woollen manufacture of Ireland, as interfering with the interests of England—that is to say, that he would blast the fortunes of the thousands engaged in this manufacture, and equally blast the prosperity of the unfortunate country whose main source of wealth he was to cut up by the roots.*

Ireland, to prompt the people of the latter to get rid of their redundant stock thus; and even in that country, in consequence of there being then no want of cattle, those of the Irish yielded very trivial profits, notwithstanding the proximity of the islands; yet, from this species of traffic, the traffic generally speaking, of a poor and depopulated country, it was deemed expedient to exclude the people of Ireland. Accordingly, the importation of black cattle and sheep was loaded with a heavy duty; by 18 C. II. c. 2, *the importation of great cattle, sheep, and swine, beef, pork, and bacon, from Ireland was declared a common nuisance, and forbid, on pain of forfeiture;* and by 32 C. II. c. 2, *forfeiture was extended to mutton, lamb, butter, and cheese, and made perpetual.*"[1103]

* "On the 9th June 1698, the English lords presented an address to king William III. stating, "that the growing manufacture of cloth in Ireland, both by *the cheapness of all sorts of necessaries of life, and goodness of materials for making all manner of cloth,* doth invite his subjects of England with their families and servants to leave their habitations to settle there, to the increase of the woollen manufacture in Ireland, which makes his loyal subjects in this kingdom very apprehensive, that the further growth of it may greatly prejudice the said manufacture here; and praying that his majesty would be pleased, in the most public and effectual way that may be, to declare to all

[1103] Newenham, 108.

To these addresses the king promised to pay attention. Several iniquitous acts* were immediately passed by the British parliament, prohibiting the exportation of wool,† woollen yarn, or woollen goods to any part of the world, except to Great Britain, on pain of forfeiture of ship and cargo, in addition to a penalty of 500*l.* for every offence. One of these acts contained a most profligate and disgraceful clause, that an acquittal in Ireland, should not operate as a bar to a new prosecution in England.

King William in his reply to the addresses of the British parliament, in order to soothe the Irish for the wanton and wicked sacrifice about to be perpetrated of their woollen trade, had pledged himself that he would encourage the linen manufacture of Ireland. But

his subjects of Ireland, that *the growth and increase of the woollen manufacture there hath long, and will be ever looked upon with great jealousy by all his subjects of this kingdom.*"[1104]

"On the 30th of June, the commons presented a similar address; and his majesty was pleased to say, in answer, "Gentlemen, I will do all that in me lies to discourage the woollen manufacture in Ireland."[1105]

* "These addresses were speedily followed by an act 10 and 11 W. III. c. 10, prohibiting the exportation of wool, yarn, new drapery, or old drapery from Ireland, to any other place but England, on pain of forfeiting ship and cargo, and 500*l.* for every offence; *no acquittal in Ireland being allowed to bar a prosecution in England.* The permission to export the woollen manufactures of Ireland to England was merely illusive; the duties on importation into the latter being tantamount to a prohibition. The duties, moreover, were seconded in their effect by a duty of four shillings in the pound ad valorem, imposed by the Irish parliament, 10 W. c. 5, on all old drapery, (frize excepted,) and two shillings on all new drapery, exported from Ireland; "the better" as the obsequious commons of Ireland observed, "to enable his majesty to provide for the future safety of his liege people."[1106]

† "From the pains which were constantly taken to prevent the exportation of wool from England, and the facility with which its importation was permitted, it might be inferred, that the object of this act, which permitted the exportation of wool from certain ports in Ireland to certain others in England, was to serve the woollen manufactures of the latter at the expense of those of the former. This restricted exportation appears, however, to have had the effect of inducing the Irish to apply, with unusual assiduity, to their woollen manufactures. In consequence thereof it was deemed expedient to embarrass them; and accordingly by 9 and 10 W. III. c. 40, the *exportation of fuller's-earth and scouring-clay to Ireland was prohibited under severe penalties.*"‡[1107]

‡ Since that time plenty of excellent fuller's-earth has been discovered in Ireland.

[1104] Newenham, 103. [1105] Ibid. [1106] Ibid. [1107] Idem, 102.

during his whole reign there was not a single act passed for that purpose.*

By an act passed anno 1695, the trade to the British colonies, which had been a source of great national benefit, was interdicted to the Irish. They were prohibited from importing any articles the growth or production of those colonies, without their being first landed, and having paid duties in England, which operated exactly as a positive prohibition of the trade altogether.†

The English parliament in one of its acts, appeared disposed to add insult and irony to injury. This act, passed in 1730, graciously permitted the direct importation into Ireland, of *all articles* of the growth, production, or manufacture of the British plantations, with the exception of *every thing but rum*. A more solemn mockery or impertinent farce could scarcely be acted.‡

The Irish, curbed and restricted in the woollen trade, entered into the manufacture of silk, in which they made considerable progress, and, had they been permitted to proceed uninterruptedly, it would have proved a source of great national gain, and given employment to thousands of persons who were then in a state of starvation. But the monopolizing spirit of England, and the corruption, venality, and destitution of public spirit of the Irish parliament, blasted it in the

* "In the reign of king William, *there did not pass a single act for the encouragement of the linen manufacture in Ireland*, although his majesty promised his commons of England to do all that in him lay to discourage the woollen, and *encourage the linen manufacture there*."[1108]

† "By 7 and 8 of W. III. c. 22, it was declared, that no commodities of the growth or manufacture of the plantations shall, on any pretence whatsoever be landed in Ireland or Scotland, unless the same has first been landed in England; and has paid the rates and duties with which they are chargeable by law. Thus was Ireland, while rendered incapable of making effectual remonstrances by national imbecility, consequent on internal disunion, avariciously excluded from the direct lucrative trade of the whole western world."[1109]

‡ "By the act just alluded to, the people of Ireland obtained permission to import directly from the plantations, into their own country *all* goods, &c. of the growth, production, or manufacture of the said plantations, *except sugars, tobacco, indigo, cotton, wool, molasses, ginger, pitch, tar, turpentine, masts, yards and bowsprits, speckle wood, Jamaica wood, fustick, or other dying woods, rice, beaver skins or other furs, or copper ore*. In fact this generous permission, to import directly from the plantations, may be considered as having been limited to rum; the easy introduction of which was equally calculated to give additional employment to the people of the West Indies, and to circumscribe the use of the Irish spirits, the manufacture whereof was likely to prove, as it afterwards did prove, an effectual encouragement to agriculture, that paramount and imperishable source of wealth and strength."[1110]

[1108] Newenham, 116. [1109] Idem, 100. [1110] Ibid.

bud. An act was passed by the latter, in 1729, which exempted the silk manufactures of England from duty on importation into Ireland. This act sealed the destruction of the Irish manufacture. Ireland was deluged with English silks—the manufacturers were deprived of a market, and ruined, and their workmen devoted to penury.*

In 1764, the Dublin society, as patriotic and public-spirited a body as ever assembled, established a silk warehouse in the capital, where the sales amounted to above 300,000 dollars annually. But this was blasted by the same detestable policy which has so constantly watched, with unwinking eyes, to destroy the prosperity of Ireland. An act was passed, anno 1785, which prohibited the society from disposing of any part of its funds for the support of any house where Irish silk goods were sold. By this act the warehouse was totally ruined.[1111]

The Irish having carried on the brewing of beer, ale, and porter, and the manufacture of glass, to great extent, and with very considerable national and individual advantage, the hostility and jealousy of the English brewers and glass manufacturers were excited, and the oppressed Irish, engaged in those useful arts, abandoned and betrayed by their miserable parliament, were sacrificed to the monopolizing spirit of their rivals. Two acts were passed, which in a great measure laid the brewery and glass manufactory prostrate. By one, all hops, landed in Ireland, except British, were directed to be burned,† and a duty of three pence per pound, over and above all other duties, customs, and subsidies, was imposed on the exportation of the article from Great Britain. By the other iniquitous act, the importation into Ireland of glass from any place other than Britain—and the exportation of the article from Ireland to any place whatsoever, were prohibited, *under penalty of forfeiture of ship and cargo, and a heavy fine per pound for all the glass found on board.*‡

* "At the time of passing the act which exempted from duty the silk manufactures of Great Britain, there were, according to the evidence given before the Irish parliament in 1784, eight hundred silk looms at work in Ireland. Thirty-six years after there were but fifty: and thus 3000 persons were driven to beggary or emigration."[1112]

† "It was enacted, by 7 G. II. c. 19, that all hops landed in Great Britain or Ireland, except British hops in the latter, should be burned, and the ship forfeited."[1113]

‡ "By 19 G. II. c. 12, the importation of glass into Ireland, from any place but Britain, and *the exportation of glass from Ireland to any place whatsoever, were prohibited, on pain of forfeiture of ship and cargo, and a penalty of ten shillings for every pound weight of glass put on board*, or on shore, on the master and every person aiding and assisting therein. Had it not been for this violent and unwarrantable act, patiently acquiesced in by the subordinate and mercenary parliament of Ireland, it is not unlikely that Ireland would have surpassed and undersold Britain in the glass manufacture, as it certainly would have done in the woollen; for in respect of all the

[1111] Picture of Dublin, 194. [1112] Newenham, 119. [1113] Idem, 105.

Under a succession of such outrageous violations of the rights of Ireland, it is not wonderful that her tonnage has been confined to a degree scarcely credible. Though her population is half that of England and Wales, the English carry on six-sevenths of the navigation of Ireland.* In 1812, the tonnage of Great Britain was tons 2,421,695
Whereas that of Ireland was only - - - - 57,103

Whether any, and, if any, what, alteration has since taken place, I have no means of ascertaining.

Among all the detestable means by which the prosperity and happiness of Ireland were sacrificed to English cupidity, one of the most shocking remains to be told. In all the former cases, the sacrifice was to promote the interests of Great Britain at large, or at least of considerable bodies of men. In the present, they were offered up to aggrandize half a dozen or a dozen persons. During the late war, under pretence of preventing the enemies of Great Britain from procuring supplies of provisions for their fleets and armies, their exportation was frequently prohibited for the benefit of the British contractors,† who were thereby enabled to purchase at half or two-

raw materials taken together, the former was as favourably circumstanced as the latter; in respect of the principal ingredient of the crown-glass manufacture, (kelp,) much more so;‡ and in respect of cheapness of labour it also had the advantage."[1114]

* "In the year ended 5th of January, 1807, there were built and registered in Ireland only 41 vessels, the aggregate tonnage whereof amounted to no more than 1,687 tons, or about 41 tons, on an average, each. The number of vessels belonging to the several ports of Ireland, on the 30th of September, 1806, was only 1,074, measuring 55,545 tons, or under 51¾ each, which is less than the tonnage of the shipping belonging to Whitehaven alone. The tonnage of Irish vessels which entered inwards into the several ports of Ireland, in the year ended 5th January, 1808, was only 107,703, while that of British vessels was 652,946. And the tonnage of Irish vessels which cleared outwards was only 97,856, while that of British vessels was 615,702, which last being added to the tonnage of the British ships which entered inwards, makes a total, amounting to 1,268,648 tons, yielding to the ship owners of Britain at only 1*l.* 10*s.* per ton, 1,902,972*l.*"[1115]

† "Not stopping with the gratification of the landholders of England, by prohibiting the importation of Irish cattle and provisions, the British government was frequently, and at a late period, *inveigled into gratifying the avarice of a few contractors, by laying embargoes on the exportation of Irish provisions*, for the ostensible purpose of preventing the enemies of Britain from being supplied therewith; *but really for the sole benefit of the contractors, who thus became the only purchasers.*"[1116]

‡ It appeared by the evidence of Mr. Hurst, before the committee of the Privy Council in 1785, that kelp, the most material ingredient in the crown-glass manufacture of England, was supplied by Ireland.

[1114] Newenham, 105. [1115] Idem, 156. [1116] Idem, 109.

thirds or three-fourths of the usual prices. This sinister operation spread destruction throughout the south of Ireland, of which the main dependence has always been the sale of provisions.

Nothing can more clearly show the utter disregard of justice of the British parliament in its legislation, whenever the interests of Ireland were concerned, and the servility of the Irish parliament, and its base sacrifice of the interests and welfare of the nation, than a comparison of the duties in England and Ireland, on the importation of goods from each other, as they existed in 1784, of which I annex a specimen. The whole system bore the same marks of iniquity and oppression.

Duties on goods

Imported into England from Ireland.	*L.*	*s.*	*d.*	*Imported into Ireland from England.*	*L.*	*s.*	*d.*
All manner of woollen cloths per yard	2	0	6	Old drapery			5
Stuffs, made or mixed with wool		5	11	New drapery			1
Refined sugar, per cwt.	5	6	9	Refined sugar, per cwt.	1	13	11
Spirits, single, not of British plantation, per gallon		3	0	Spirits, single, not of British plantation, per gallon		2	3
Cotton manufactures, per cent.	29	15	10	Cotton manufactures, per cent.	9	18	5
Linen and cotton mixed per cent.	29	15	10	Linen and cotton mixed, per cent.	9	18	5
Linen cloth printed, per cent	65	10	10	Linen cloth printed, per cent.	9	18	5
Leather manufactures, per cent.	65	10	10	Leather manufactures, per cent.	9	18	5
Wrought silks prohibited				Wrought silks, per lb.		7	5
Tallow candles, per cwt.	1	9	8	Tallow candles, per cwt.		5	6
Starch, per cwt.	4	12	1	Starch per cwt.		6	5
Soap, per cwt.	2	7	8	Soap, per cwt.		5	11
Checks, per piece, not above ten yards		3	11	Checks, per piece, not above ten yards		1	3
And besides, for every 100*l.* value	35	15	0				
Bed ticks, per cent.	29	15	0	Bed ticks, per cent.	9	15	8[117]

It is impossible to examine this table without sighing over the profligate disregard of the eternal laws of honour and justice displayed by public bodies, unchecked by any sense of shame or disgrace.

Had the British parliament decimated the whole nation, and imposed a poll tax of five guineas per head on the survivors, they would not have produced the tenth part of the misery caused by this odious and iniquitous system, which paralized the industry and energies of the Irish, and consigned so large a portion of them to idleness, misery, and wretchedness.

[117] Newenham, 106. N. B. I have omitted the fractions on both sides.

CHAPTER III.

Extreme misery of the Irish peasantry, in point of food, clothing, and habitations. Potatoes and milk, or potatoes and salt, the chief part of the fare of a large portion of them.

When we see a suffering people, "*with depressed minds and indolent habits, we do not ascribe their poverty to the men who govern them: but no one who sees a mangy, half-starved flock of sheep, ever doubts that it is the fault of the farmer to whom it belongs.*"[1117]

"*The misgovernment and consequent misery of Ireland are chargeable, not upon the present minister, but upon the English nation generally, and upon all the statesmen, of every persuasion, who have administered its affairs for the last two centuries.*"[1118]

"*The discontent and poverty of the people of Ireland are entirely owing to the vicious political institutions of the country, and the misgovernment and oppression to which they have been subjected.*"[1119]

"*It is only by exposing national evils, that the attention of those who have it in their power to apply a remedy, can be excited.*"[1120]

I NOW proceed to present a slight sketch of the wretchedness entailed on the Irish by the preceding system, from the commencement of the last century, when the depredations perpetrated by warfare and sham plots had ceased, and the great mass of the landed property of the nation had been transferred from the original proprietors, most of whom had been reduced to abject penury. This system, steadily pursued, has blasted the manifold blessings bestowed by heaven on that ill-fated land.

That no industry, talent, or energy could withstand the deleterious effects of such a barbarous and unrelenting persecution as was carried on against the national industry of Ireland, must be obvious on the slightest investigation. And that the necessary consequence of such a system, wherever it prevails, must be to deprive myriads of the people of profitable employment—diminish the demand for labour—lower its price—and thus spread desolation and distress around, is as clear as the noon-day sun. Such have been its pernicious effects in Ireland. All travellers agree, that an intensity of misery prevails among a large portion of the Irish peasantry, in their food, their clothing, and their habitations, which is hardly credible.

The proofs of these assertions shall be drawn from three works of high reputation, written at three different periods—"Young's Tour in Ireland," published in 1776—"Newenham's View of the Natural, Political, and Commercial Circumstances of Ireland," in 1809—and "Mason's Statistical Account, or Parochial Survey of Ireland," in 1816.

These works coincide in their statements, and draw such a hideous picture of the sufferings of the Irish, springing chiefly from the detestable system of which I have sketched the outlines in the preceding chapter, as must reflect eternal disgrace on the monopolizing spirit, which suggested it—on the various English administrations by

[1117] Maurice and Berghetta. [1118] Edin. Rev. XXXVII. p. 63.
[1119] Idem, 109. [1120] Wakefield, II. 780.

which it was matured—and, more than all, on the wretched Irish parliament, who basely purchased the right to enslave and depredate on their Roman Catholic fellow subjects, by the odious and execrable sacrifice of the dearest interests of their native country.*

"The common Irish are in general clothed so very indifferently, that it impresses every stranger with a strong idea of universal poverty."[1121]

"*The cottages of the Irish, which are all called cabins, are the most miserable looking hovels that can well be conceived:* they generally consist of only one room; mud kneaded with straw is the common material of the walls; these are rarely above seven feet high, and not always above five or six; they are about two feet thick, and have only a door, which lets in light instead of a window, and should let the smoke out instead of a chimney."[1122]

They are "scantily supplied with potatoes; clothed with rags; famished with cold, in their comfortless habitations: nor *can they, though sober, frugal and laborious, which, from my own knowledge, I assert, provide against infirmity and old age, with any other resource than begging or dependence;* than the precarious relief of charity; extremeties to which many are constantly reduced."[1123]

"The population of the country is much increased of late years; and it is a sad reflection, that *their miseries are multiplied in the same proportion.* The wealth of other states is appreciated by the number of their children, and *with the Irish peasant, they constitute his misfortune and poverty.* How few of them enjoy the luxury of a little milk."[1124]

"Throughout the King's county, *the cottages of the peasants are miserably poor and wretched,* in few instances weather proof."[1125]

"*The cabins, or rather hovels, of the cotter tenants, are in general wretched, beyond description,* often not sufficiently covered to keep out the rain: they are all built with mud."[1126]

"The state of the poor cannot be worse than it is in many parts of Meath and Kildare."[1127]

"The clothing of the people, *if rags which scarcely cover their nakedness can be so called,* consists of wollen cloth or frieze, manufactured at home, and almost every other article of their dress is made by themselves."[1128]

* This wretched body was signalized throughout its career, with few exceptions, by a destitution of honour and honesty, of which the "ferocious code to prevent the growth of Popery," a code which legalized almost every species of crime, would be sufficient proof. I now adduce another striking case. In the year 1735, they passed a vote, by which they declared every man a traitor to his country, who should assist in a prosecution for tithes of agistment, that is, for the tithes of pasture lands: and thus, according to the Edinburgh Review, threw the clergy of the established church "from the opulent grazier, and the Protestant proprietor, upon the Catholic peasantry—for the peasantry are almost universally Catholics—for support."[1129]

[1121] Young, II. part ii. 35. [1122] Ibid. [1123] Wakefield, II. 774. [1124] Idem, 775. [1125] Ibid. [1126] Idem, 779. [1127] Idem, 780. [1128] Idem, 731. [1129] Edinburgh, Review, XXXVII. 75.

"*These people are depressed beyond all conception*, and what may appear astonishing, they bear their degradation without murmuring or complaint."[1130]

"*The inhabitants are poor, and their cabins are wretched huts, with a wattled door lined with a straw mat in the inside.*"[1131]

They "have scarcely any clothing but rags, and in general wear neither shoes nor stockings."[1132]

"*The poor throughout Connaught live in a state of great wretchedness; oatmeal is a luxury which they seldom taste.*"[1133]

"*Meat is no part of the food of these people.* Whatever animals they rear and fatten, 'they sell,' according to their own expressions, 'to the northerns.'"[1134]

"The country round the Arigna iron works, is inhabited by a people, who, according to every appearance, are *in a most wretched condition. They are badly clothed, and reside in dirty mud cabins, continually filled with smoke.*"[1135]

"The lower orders are in general very poor. *Their usual food is potatoes and milk.*"[1136]

"Their food is the same as this class of persons in most other parts of Ireland, make use of: viz. potatoes, and occasionally fish; *they are seldom so circumstanced, as to be able to obtain a constant and sufficient supply of milk.*"[1137]

"*Potatoes and milk form the general food*, to which is often added, fish procured from the Shannon and the lake."[1138]

"The general food of the inhabitants is potatoes, meal, and milk; *some of the wealthier farmers occasionally eat animal food.*"[1139]

"*Their food is potatoes, with milk or fish. The rich farmers eat pork sometimes.*"[1140]

"Their dwellings are usually very indifferent and dirty, and even devoid of necessaries. Many sleep on the damp floor. *Their clothing for day or night is often very scanty.*"[1141]

"The general food of the peasantry is potatoes. During the lent season, and a little before and after, salted herrings make an addition to their daily food. Flesh meat is seldom used in their cottages, except on remarkable occasions, as at Christmas and Easter, and even then, the only kind used is pork or bacon."[1142]

"*The greater part of the inhabitants of this rich and populous district live upon potatoes and milk.*"[1143]

I could go on with the harrowing detail to fill a volume—but I trust I have given enough to prove the abject state to which the lower orders of society are reduced in one of the most highly-gifted portions of the globe, owing to the blighting policy under which they groaned for centuries.

[1130] Wakefield, II. 736. [1131] Idem, 745. [1132] Idem, 747. [1133] Idem, 751.
[1134] Ibid. [1135] Idem, 752. [1136] Mason, II. 96. [1137] Idem, 131.
[1138] Idem, 145. [1139] Idem, 209. [1140] Idem, 310. [1141] Idem, 324.
[1142] Idem, 403. [1143] Idem, 452.

THE END

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DEC 10 1935